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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixtieth session

Holocaust remembrance

Letter dated 12 August 2005 from the representatives of Australia, Canada, Israel, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our respective Governments, we have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixtieth session of a supplementary item entitled "Holocaust remembrance", under the heading "Promotion of human rights". We also request that this agenda item be considered directly in plenary meeting. Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, please find attached an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II).

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Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Gilbert **Laurin**
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Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Permanent Representative
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Permanent Representative
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Annex I to the letter dated 12 August 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Australia, Canada, Israel, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanatory memorandum

1. In 2005, as we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, we also mark the sixtieth year since the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. The connection between those two events is testimony to the fact that the establishment of the United Nations, its founding principles and its noble mission were a response to the horrors of the Second World War and the tragedy of the Holocaust, as is reflected in the very first clauses of the Charter of the United Nations.

2. The Holocaust constituted a systematic and barbarous attempt to annihilate an entire people, in a manner and magnitude that have no parallel in human history. Six million Jews, a full third of the Jewish people, together with countless other minorities, were murdered. And yet, while the Holocaust was a unique tragedy for the Jewish people, its lessons are universal.

3. The United Nations, an organization founded on the ashes of the Holocaust and committed to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to uphold and protect the "dignity and worth of the human person", bears a special responsibility to ensure that the Holocaust and its lessons are never forgotten and that this tragedy will forever serve as a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice.

4. In January 2005, Member States of the United Nations convened a historic special session of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. At that session, Member States committed themselves to the principle of "Never again!" and affirmed the important role and responsibility of the United Nations in Holocaust remembrance and education to honour the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to stand watch against the re-emergence of such evil for the benefit of future generations. The fulfilment of that responsibility becomes ever more urgent as the generation of Holocaust survivors dwindle and in the face of an alarming increase in global acts of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, racism and religious intolerance.

5. The consideration of the proposed item and the adoption of the proposed draft resolution (see annex II) would formalize and institutionalize Holocaust remembrance and education within the United Nations system. It is particularly fitting that the item be included in the agenda of the upcoming landmark session of the General Assembly, which will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations.

6. The proposed draft resolution comprises 10 preambular paragraphs and six operative paragraphs. In its operative part, the resolution calls on the United Nations, inter alia, to establish 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It urges Member States to develop educational programmes to inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide. It further rejects

any denial of the Holocaust, and condemns without reservation all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur. In its final operative paragraph the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach entitled "The Holocaust and the United Nations", as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education.

7. The sponsors of the present request call on all Member States to support the inclusion of the proposed supplementary item in the agenda of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and to co-sponsor the proposed draft resolution. In so doing, Member States will demonstrate their commitment to the cause of Holocaust remembrance and education, act to help prevent future acts of genocide and advance the fulfilment by the United Nations of its core mission and founding principles.

Annex II to the letter dated 12 August 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Australia, Canada, Israel, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Draft resolution
Holocaust remembrance

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion or other status,

Recalling article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person,

Recalling also article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Bearing in mind that the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" is testimony to the indelible link between the United Nations and the unique tragedy of the Second World War,

Recalling the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was adopted in order to avoid repetition of such genocides as those committed by the Nazi regime,

Recalling also the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of mankind,

Taking note of the fact that the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is being held during the sixtieth year of the defeat of the Nazi regime,

Recalling the twenty-eighth special session of the General Assembly, a unique event, which was held in commemoration of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps,

Honouring the courage and dedication shown by the soldiers who liberated the concentration camps,

Reaffirming that the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people along with countless members of other minorities, will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice,

1. *Resolves* that the United Nations will designate 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust;

2. *Urges* Member States to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide and, in that context, commends the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research;

3. *Rejects* any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event, either in full or in part;

4. *Commends* States which have actively engaged in preserving sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labour camps and prisons during the Holocaust;

5. *Condemns* without reserve all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach entitled "The Holocaust and the United Nations", as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, in order to help prevent future acts of genocide; to report to the General Assembly on the establishment of the programme within six months from the date of the adoption of the present resolution; and to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the programme.